

TRAVIS NELSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 44
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Testimony in Support for House Bill 2548 -2

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Munoz and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards,

My name is Travis Nelson, and I am the State Representative for House District 44 – North and Northeast Portland.

As a Chief Sponsor of HB 2548 -2, I am writing to express my support for this critical legislation. This bill will establish a Farmworker Standards Board in Oregon which is a necessary and long-overdue step to ensure the safety, equity, and sustainability of our agricultural sector. Agriculture has long been the backbone of Oregon's economy, providing livelihoods for countless families across the state. Yet, the workers who sustain this industry continue to face inadequate protections. HB 2548 -2 is not just another policy measure but is a fundamental commitment to fairness and the long-term stability of Oregon's agricultural workforce.

Oregon's farmworkers have long been overlooked, enduring unsafe working conditions and insufficient protections. This longstanding oversight must be addressed. The creation of a Farmworker Standards Board will provide a vital platform for workers and employers to collaborate in establishing fair wages, safer working conditions, and essential training protocols. This board represents an opportunity to rectify historical exclusions, elevate worker voices, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Oregon's agricultural industry.

My connection to this issue runs deep. I spent much of my life in southeastern Washington, in a rural agricultural area and my mother operates a small ranch in Texas. I am also a descendant of sharecroppers—my grandfather experienced firsthand the systemic injustices that, while evolved, persist today. These struggles are not just historical but are ongoing. Many farmworkers in Oregon, predominantly Latino and immigrant laborers, still earn below a living wage. Why? Because they have been left out of the conversation for too long. HB 2548 -2 provides a means to address these disparities and ensure that farmworkers' voices help shape industry standards.

The Farmworker Standards Board is designed as a collaborative forum where stakeholders, employers, and employees work together to create practical, equitable solutions tailored to Oregon's agricultural sector. As farms consolidate and the industry evolves, we must take proactive steps to ensure the sustainability of both our agricultural economy and the labor force that drives it.

Oregon is continuing to strive to lead with fairness and equity. HB 2548 -2 is a critical step in that direction. I urge your support for this bill and to uphold the dignity of our farmworkers and secure a sustainable future for Oregon agriculture.

Thank you,

State Representative Travis Nelson
House District 44, North/NE Portland